



# THE UNEXAMINED LIFE

Philosophy and the  
African Experience

KWAME GYEKYE

ISBN = 32709

190703

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AND THE AFRICAN EXPERIENCE**



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*An Inaugural Lecture delivered at the  
University of Ghana on  
Thursday, May 7, 1987*



**GHANA UNIVERSITIES PRESS  
ACCRA  
1988**

Published for the University of Ghana

*by*

Ghana Universities Press  
P. O. Box 4219  
Accra

© Kwame Gyekye 1988  
ISBN : 9964-3-0147-2

Produced in Ghana

*Typesetting by MES Equipment Ltd., Accra.*  
*Printing and Binding by Commercial Associates Ltd., Accra*

*To*  
**Professor Kwasi Wiredu**

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# THE UNEXAMINED LIFE : PHILOSOPHY AND THE AFRICAN EXPERIENCE

*The unexamined life is not worth living*

Socrates

## INTRODUCTION

There has been a great deal of misconception about the nature, purpose and methods of the intellectual enterprise called philosophy. The misconception appears heightened among public policy makers and people who are generally concerned about the production of the material base of livelihood, about the existential conditions in which human beings function. This misconception has in some people matured into prejudice and resilient scepticism about the real relevance of philosophy to public affairs. In consequence, philosophers have been charged with, among other things, a preoccupation with abstract theoretical concerns, with apriorism, elitism, uninvolvedness in the practical affairs of life, and irrelevance. These charges have resulted in philosophy becoming almost invariably the first to be stretched on the Procrustean bed when the budget directors consider cutting or withdrawing grants or subventions to university departments. Thus, in the wake of cuts in financial grants to universities in Britain by the Margaret Thatcher government in the last few years, philosophy departments in some half a dozen British universities have been closed down. This kind of situation is of course caused by ignorance or prejudice against the place of philosophy in the affairs of human society.

My intention in this lecture is manifold : to try to articulate the nature, purpose and methods of the philosophical



enterprise in order to dispel misconceptions about it; to examine the career of this enterprise from the perspective of its role in the affairs of human society generally; to provide some indications about how philosophy can conceptually interact with and so interpret the African experience with its many-sidedness, including a critical examination of concepts and values in traditional African life and thought; and to apply philosophical analysis to three important but troubling and often uncomprehended and confused concepts in contemporary African socio-economic and political life, namely, the concepts of development, ideology and African socialism.

## NATURE, PURPOSE AND METHODS OF PHILOSOPHY

Let us begin then with some observations about what philosophy is. Philosophers are not, I must say, in complete agreement on the definition of their discipline. Nevertheless, a close examination of the nature and purpose of the intellectual activities of thinkers from various cultures and societies of the world reveals, undoubtedly in my view, that philosophy is essentially a rational, critical and systematic inquiry into the fundamental ideas underlying human thought, experience and conduct. Ideas are the means by which we explain, interpret and understand the world and our experiences in it. The word 'ideas' includes the beliefs and assumptions or presuppositions that we hold and cherish. Every human society consists of some arrangements and institutions — social, political, legal, etc. — established to meet the various needs of the society. These arrangements, needless to say, are based on ideas, for they were not thoughtlessly established, neither did they occur randomly. The institution of punishment, for instance, is based on the assumption that human beings **are free** agents and are, therefore, free in the choice of their actions, and hence that they are responsible for those

actions. The assumption of human free will upon which the ascription of both moral and legal responsibility is based is thus a fundamental assumption that can critically be – and is in fact – examined by philosophy. Thus, philosophy is essentially concerned with the critical inquiry into the most basic of our ideas or assumptions.

These ideas often appear in the form of problems. That is to say, an idea may result from, or be wrapped up in, a problem; thus philosophical speculations are generated by problems. Philosophical problems about political obligation arise because some citizens raised questions about the conditions under which they should obey their government that could not be satisfactorily answered; problems about knowledge, death and immortality, moral conflicts, human free will arise because someone raised questions that could not be adequately answered. Philosophy grapples with problems such as these, problems which cannot be solved by empirical methods. Philosophy is thus a conceptual response to the basic human problems that arise in any given society at a given era. I do not think that any rational being could quarrel with philosophy's concern to clarify and critically appraise our fundamental ideas or to rationally disentangle basic human problems; for such an enterprise, if successful, could form the basis of a satisfactory way of life. For instance, the knowledge that our actions are free or not free is relevant to the question of the justifiability or unjustifiability of the ascription of responsibility; similarly, the knowledge that the human soul is immortal or that it is corporeal and mortal will affect our view of the purposes of a person's life and the kind of a person we would want to become. Philosophy thus invites us to be self-critical and to know what things are most worthwhile. These purposes of philosophy, if considered seriously, would perhaps not be subjected to much questioning.

However, while it may be considered appropriate and use-

ful to seriously examine the fundamental ideas that shape and influence our lives and to rationally unravel basic human problems, the philosopher's methods have, due to misconception, also come under criticism by those sceptical about the relevance of the philosophical activity. Philosophy, it is said, is concerned about abstract matters. And from this premise it is erroneously inferred that the philosophical activity is unrelated to the practical concerns of man, concerns which are concrete and specific. It is indeed part of the method of philosophy to operate at a more abstract level; but the conclusion that has been drawn from this by nonphilosophers is misguided. The abstract level at which the philosopher operates is perhaps unavoidable inasmuch as philosophical questions are very often general. (Incidentally, the greater generality possessed by philosophical questions is one of the important ways in which philosophy differs from the special sciences). Whenever two people — nonphilosophers (any two of you in the audience) — are disputing about whether or not a particular action of their government was just or democratic, and one of them, perhaps wanting to be clearer about the concepts involved in the dispute, asks 'what is justice?' (or 'what is it to be just?') or, 'what is democracy?' (or 'what is it to be democratic?'), he would be raising a philosophical question. And if both of them attempted to answer the question in a sustained manner, they would immediately and necessarily involve themselves in abstract thinking, aimed at clarifying some concepts, an activity that may well prove helpful to the resolution of the dispute. And so it is that the abstract level at which the philosopher operates is intended to offer him a vantage point from which to beam his analytical searchlight on the inarticulate and woolly beliefs and thoughts of men. So that the abstract reflections of the philosopher need not — should not — detract from the relevance and value of the philosophical enterprise in the search for answers to at least some of the problems of human society.

Perhaps the most outstanding method of philosophy is reflection. It is a reflection on human life and experience; thus philosophy does not, and cannot, dispense with experience or observation. This is not to say, however, that philosophical problems can be solved by empirical methods, for no amount of observation can determine whether or not the universe has a purpose and whether and in what sense human beings have free will; it is not to say either that philosophy directly derives its conclusions from experience or observation. What it means rather is that philosophy raises fundamental and profound questions about experience in order to explore its meaning and to construct from it a synthetic and coherent picture of ultimate reality. This is the speculative aspect of the philosophical activity, the aspect that is not merely descriptive — telling us about how things are, but also normative — prescribing what ought to be the case, how human beings ought to live and what their systems of values ought to be.

It is in the normative aspect of philosophical thinking that the practical concerns of philosophy come to the fore, for this aspect clearly offers rational guidance on questions of individual action and social policy, and can in this way provide people with fundamental systems of beliefs to live by. This is not to say, though, that the speculative or normative approach of philosophy is the most important. For, after all, the real functioning or viability of this approach itself depends both on our having clear and profound comprehension of the concepts involved, and on thorough investigation into the standards by which some prescribed values are justified. This latter approach, involving the clarification of concepts or ideas, is usually referred to as conceptual analysis, which some philosophers would regard as the main task of philosophy. But whether conceptual analysis is the main task of philosophy or not, it is evident that the speculative approach depends on it, inasmuch as the elements of the latter approach

need to have been given prior clarification. Thus, the speculative presupposes the analytic. For this reason, most speculative philosophers have paid considerable attention to analytic philosophy, just as a number of analytic philosophers have also focussed their analytic gaze on some substantive (normative) matters in human affairs. In Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Locke, Bentham, J.S. Mill, R.M. Hare, John Rawls, Thomas Nagel, Kwasi Wiredu and in many other philosophers, the two approaches are in play. This indicates the awareness of philosophers that their enterprise, or at least some part of it, should have practical concerns, that philosophical analysis can, and should, be brought to bear on issues of ordinary everyday life and experience.

## PHILOSOPHY IN THE AFFAIRS OF MAN AND SOCIETY: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

That philosophy is oriented, directly or indirectly, toward action and practical affairs is evidenced even in the philosophical activities of the ancient Greek philosophers, the impulse of whose speculations was generally metaphysical. Plato's Theory of Forms — the warp and woof of Plato's philosophical system — was essentially a metaphysical theory, that is, a theory about reality or being; but its ultimate aim was the search for standards (Greek : *paradeigmata*) in social, ethical and political matters with a view to reforming society. In his famous allegory of the cave in his best-known dialogue — the *Republic*<sup>1</sup> — Plato's point is that after obtaining philosophical knowledge, which, for Plato, derives from the contemplation of the Forms, the philosopher must in turn descend to the cave to take part in the task of ruling. The philosopher would thus involve himself/herself in the affairs of the society of the cave — which is the society of the ordinary nonphilosopher. This is a case of a metaphysical odyssey

that ends up in the concerns for the practical affairs of society, a metaphysical (abstract) soaring which descends mainly for the purpose of illuminating the ideas of men and thus the concrete facts of life based thereon. This metaphysical approach to attaining a standard of moral value had a precursor in Socrates, in his search for universals. In his investigations into moral phenomena, Aristotle's aim was that "we are inquiring not in order to know what virtue is [that is, not just the meaning of virtue] but in order to *become* good since otherwise our inquiry would have been of no use."<sup>2</sup>

There are also a number of philosophers whose ideas have had direct and immediate impact on political and socio-economic circumstances (to mention only the conspicuous areas) of their societies or age or on later generations. Mention of a couple of examples in modern philosophy should suffice. Adam Smith, the high-priest of the doctrine of free market economy, was a moral *philosopher* (not an economist!) at Glasgow University. Before being given the chair of moral philosophy, he had held the chair of logic, and before writing his famous book for which he is known to the world, he had written a book on moral philosophy entitled *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. It was his philosophical insights into human nature and society and his views about morality that led to the publication of his classic *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), in which he examines such notions as division of labour, wages of labour, profits of stock, natural and market price of commodities, and so on. Adam Smith's moral philosophy had a great impact on his ideas on political economy. Immersed in the ideas of philosopher Adam Smith, David Ricardo, an economist who put capitalism (the free enterprise system) in the classical form that has come to us today, revised and trumpeted the ideas of the philosopher from the perspective of the world of business. Adam Smith's philosophical insights

into socio-economic conditions of his time have come to constitute the basis of the economic thought and practice of many developed and developing nations of the world today, two centuries after the publication of his book. Inasmuch as Mrs. Margaret Thatcher is a leading protagonist and defender of the economic faith of philosopher Adam Smith, her allowing her budgetary policies to lead to the closure of philosophy departments in some British universities is a clear case of pushing away the ladder, hardly an act of wisdom or prudence.

The utilitarian moral philosophers of 19th century England were thinkers committed to social reform. Jeremy Bentham, a distinguished philosopher, was more concerned with practical than with purely theoretical issues. A leader of a group called the Philosophical Radicals, whose activities led to the formation of the British Liberal Party, his aim was to modernize Britain's social and political institutions. His philosophical arguments as well as his personal involvements played some significant role in the eventual passage of the Reform Bill of 1832 which radically reformed British politics by removing the control of Parliament from the aristocratic class, and putting it in the hands of the urban middle class. The other well-known utilitarian philosopher, John Stuart Mill, also devoted the whole of his life to programmes of social reform, and thus carried on the tradition of the Philosophical Radicals. It should be noted that Mill was also a logician, involved in purely formal studies. The practical concerns demonstrated not only in the philosophical arguments but also in the personal involvement of some philosophers in socio-political reform programmes clearly give the lie to Karl Marx's view that "Philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways, but the real point is to change it."<sup>3</sup> As already observed, Plato, Aristotle, Bentham, Mill and others (see pp. 11—12 below) set themselves the task of *reforming* the societies in which they lived. Moreover, chan-

ging the world involves having goals, and philosophy can be of great assistance in defining and articulating those goals.

In a discussion of the practical consequences of philosophical insights, I cannot forget to mention the insights of John Rawls of Harvard (whose lectures on moral, social and political philosophy I had the privilege of listening to in my graduate days at Harvard). The influence of Rawls' monumental work called *A Theory of Justice*<sup>4</sup> on legal treatises as well as on discussions of social policy has been enormous, particularly in the United States. It may be said that Rawls was at least in part interacting conceptually with American socio-political experience in the wake both of the civil rights movements and debates about the controversial status of certain disadvantaged groups in the United States, and of the Anti-Vietnam War movement. These movements or events threw into relief basic questions about the fairness of socio-political institutions and the distribution of the resources and burdens of society. Rawls' ideas on justice have been extensively discussed in journals not only of philosophy but also of political science, social theory, economics and law.

These examples of the impact of philosophical arguments and insights on human affairs — examples that can be multiplied — are of course intended to clear up the misconception about the relevance of the philosophical enterprise to practical human concerns. The examples do suggest the conviction that the ultimate goal of philosophizing is — and ought to be — the concern for the nature of the good in human being or society — for human values, and not for dry and abstract matters for their own sake. The word 'ultimate' here is important and is used advisedly : it is used to indicate that concern for dry and abstract matters should somehow or other conduce eventually to the determination of the nature of human values. Every branch of philosophy is, and ought to be, concerned in one way or another, directly or indirectly, with the problems of human value.



But it must be noted that those philosophers I have just referred to were grappling at the conceptual level with problems and issues of their times, even though this does not mean that the relevance of their ideas, insights, arguments and conclusions is to be tethered to those times; for, more often than not the relevance of their insights, or at least some of them, transcends the limits of their own times and cultures or societies. However, even though the historical or cultural specificity of a philosophical idea or insight does not necessarily detract from its relevance to other cultures or times, the fact still remains that the philosophers who produced those ideas were giving critical attention to the intellectual foundations of their culture; that is to say, their cultural experiences provided the setting for their conceptual explorations; the problems of their times were made the points of departure for their analysis. Philosophy is thus a conceptual response to the problems posed in any given epoch for a given society. This point is important and should be borne in mind as we come to discuss how philosophy can conceptually grapple with the affairs of modern Africa.

Conceptual response, even though necessary, is not a sufficient condition for effecting changes in a given society. Yet it is an important way and the first step in the pursuit of changes in society. It may be said that Plato's excoriation of democracy in the *Republic* were the result of his observations and experiences of the politics of Athens during the Peloponnesian war between Athens and Sparta. The war is said to have broken out in 431 B.C. and to have ended in 404 B.C. Plato was born in 427 (428) B.C., that is, four years after the outbreak of the war. The first twenty-three years of his life were thus lived in times of war, political instability and uncertainty. Athens, Plato's city-state, was constantly being defeated in the various battles of the war, the result, as Plato saw it, of the confusion and weakness of the 'democratic' form of government, where 'democracy', the rule of the

people, was practised in accordance with the literal meaning of the term. Plato thought that it was the rule (*krateia*) of the people (*demos*) that had led to the bitter experiences of Athens, and there was therefore some justification to revolt against democracy. Hence his advocacy of the rule by the philosopher — kings, the rule of the intelligentsia. Even though Plato's advocacy of the rule by the intelligentsia can hardly be justified, the main point to note is that here is a philosopher whose thesis takes its rise from, or is influenced by, the peculiar circumstances of his society. Plato was giving conceptual response to the problems of government in his day. Aristotle's work on moral philosophy called the *Nicomachean Ethics* was at least in part an interpreter of Greek experience. In his ethical inquiries Aristotle makes the current views about what happiness or virtue is his starting-point : "It is enough", he wrote, "if we take the most common opinions and those that seem reasonable."<sup>5</sup> Thus, Russell correctly observed that "Aristotle's opinions on moral questions are always such as were conventional in his day."<sup>6</sup> It has been said of the American philosopher, John Dewey (d.1952), that "many of his own writings were attempts to apply *critical intelligence to the moral and cultural issues of his day*."<sup>7</sup>

The philosophical responses to the consequences of the French Revolution may be briefly mentioned. It may be said that modern social and political philosophy of the West dates from the French Revolution. Before this historic event, modern political philosophy had concerned itself with the classical problems of who should rule and how. The French Revolution posed new problems not only in France but throughout the Western world. One of the consequences of the Revolution was the birth of a new species of political and social philosophy : this was the idea of the welfare state, the idea that the object of the state was to secure the happiness of its people. Philosophers like Hegel, Auguste Comte, Victor

Cousin, Saint Simon and of course the illustrious Karl Marx were all convinced that the French Revolution had ruptured the political and moral fabric and basis of European society, and that it was an opportune occasion to use philosophy constructively to serve as the basis for a moral regeneration of society on which alone a stable political edifice could be rebuilt. Hence, the torrent of socialist credos of 19th century Europe.

I have indeed laboured the point that philosophy responds at the conceptual level to the fundamental problems posed by any given era. Such conceptual responses are by no means confined to matters of politics and morality; they encompass matters or problems of science, religion, law and education.

## PHILOSOPHY AND THE AFRICAN EXPERIENCE

I have, I think, dwelt at great length on the career of philosophy in other societies. This has been done on purpose, for I believe that how philosophy can and should conceptually interact with the African experience cannot be said to be different from how this has been done for other societies and cultures. But it is obvious that much of the importance and thrust of that conceptual interaction will depend on the kinds of problems, issues, concepts or ideas that attract the attention of the African philosopher. Even though I do not want to undercut the pretensions of philosophy to universalism in respect of doctrine, I maintain, nevertheless, that it is certain fundamental problems posed for a given society or era by new situations that give rise to philosophizing, that is, the raising of fundamental questions, and the search for some profound answers. On this showing, problems and concepts that occupy the attention of groups of philosophers need not be the *same*. Similarly, what constitutes the core of one philosophical tradition does not necessarily have to constitute

the core of another philosophical tradition; how a particular set of subjects becomes the core of a philosophical tradition is a complex question to unravel. It seems that the choice of concepts that, for one reason or another, are brought to the front burner in the philosophical analysis of philosophers is determined by culture, history, intentions, hopes and fears, or by a combination of these factors. It is the "chosen race" of concepts that in time comes to make up the core of the philosophy of a particular group and, thus, of a particular philosophical tradition.

After attending the Indian Congress of Philosophy in 1951 the late Cambridge philosopher, A.C. Ewing, made the following noteworthy remarks : "Indian philosophy is traditionally more connected than English with the search for the good life in the religious sense. . . India remains a great stronghold of metaphysical idealism. . . It is a commonplace that the Indians are a very religious people, and the connection between philosophy and religion fostered by Hinduism and the fact that Indian philosophers are on the whole much more interested in the problems raised by the philosophy of religion than in those raised by the philosophy of science helps to account for their immunity to naturalism and positivism."<sup>8</sup> Thus, in spite of India's long contact with Westernism in all its facets, the core values — the religious values — of Indian life and thought were still in the ascendant among the factors influencing the direction and whirlpool of Indian philosophical reflection.

African societies in the past half century have been grappling with a variety of problems, most of which are the results of colonialism, imperialism and industrialism. Solving such problems and reconstructing African societies in the post-colonial era will certainly require profound investigation into fundamental ideas and principles. *And this is where philosophy becomes of immense relevance.* It is the task of modern African philosophers to use philosophy construc-

tively not only to deal with the consequences of colonialism on African society and culture, but also to face squarely the challenges of industrialization and modernization. To do this most effectively, it is imperative, of course, that they philosophize with the contemporary situation in mind, that they give conceptual interpretation to contemporary experience.

Modern African philosophers can provide conceptual responses to the problems confronting contemporary African societies. Areas where they could operate with immediate profit and practical relevance include social, moral, legal and political philosophy. For instance, the past two decades have seen a great deal of political instability in a number of African countries, leading to military takeovers of the reins of government. It is appropriate for African philosophers to investigate the fundamental questions relating to African political life and institutions, such as : How can the legitimacy of military governments be established? Can the one-party system of government be justified by appeal to any fundamental moral or political principles? Is there any moral justification for political violence, revolution and guerilla war? What moral problems are generated by development and modernization, and by the transfer of technology? What connection, if any, exists between moral standards and economic conditions? These are some of the questions that must engage the attention of the modern African political and moral philosopher. Similarly, fundamental questions about the structure and objectives of the African systems of law and education should be examined by the African legal and educational philosopher. Of course questions such as these are, and can be, asked by philosophers of other non-African societies. But I believe that the proposals put forward by African philosophers in answer to them may in fact be different from those of non-African philosophers. The most important thing is that African philosophers would be responding conceptually to a contemporary situation of their

societies.

### **Development : A Brief Philosophical Analysis**

Consider the problem of the choice of effective approaches to development. Development is what most people in African and other Third World countries are talking about; it is the goal of every government in the Third World. It is in pursuit of this goal that financial and other kinds of aid are sought by the Third World countries from the industrialized, wealthy countries of the world; and it is in furtherance of that same goal that some form of aid is provided by the latter countries. Since development has, until most recently, been identified with economic growth, the problem of development seems to have become a problem solely for economists, engineers, agriculturalists, technologists, bankers, population experts, urban planners and others whose professions are directly connected with the production of the material means of livelihood. Understanding development in this way, international organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have geared most of their activities in Africa and elsewhere towards the production of material things, increase of food production, building of roads, etc. And, similarly, centres of research called Institutes of Development round the world have devoted almost all their attention to the problems of economic development. Thus, it is that development has been conceived in terms of economic growth — in terms of economism. Such an economic conception of development is surely lopsided and inadequate; the concept thus requires some clarification. I attempt a brief analysis of it here.

The question, What is development? like the question, What is truth? or What is virtue? is of course a philosophical question, an answer to which can be sought through a profound inquiry into the general or defining characteristics of the concept. Thus, as framed, the question cannot be adequately handled by any of the special sciences such as eco-

nomics, sociology, anthropology, political science, etc. even though these sciences may of course have something relevant and important to say about it. But the question, to repeat, is a philosophical question. Just as the question, What is truth? may be reexpressed as, what is it for a statement to be true, so the question, What is development? may be reexpressed as, what is it for an object, say, society, culture, institution to be (considered) developed? On what grounds do we judge or conclude that an object *X* is developed while an object *Y* is underdeveloped or less developed?

As regards human society, it is tempting — and many have succumbed to the temptation — to conceive development, as I have said, in terms solely of economic growth, in terms, that is, of gross national product (GNP) and income per capita. However, the equation between development and economic growth is without conceptual or empirical warrant. Economic growth can only be considered as a consequent or measure of economic development. Sometimes the two terms, ‘development’ and ‘growth’, are used interchangeably; but I think this is a mistake. For it appears that growth is a physical (sensory) concept measured in quantitative terms, while development essentially is a behavioural concept. Thus, when a person who has not seen his nephew, a young adult, looking tall and big (call him ‘Opata’) for six years, suddenly sees him, the person will say, “Hi, Opata, you have *grown*.” He would hardly say, “Hi, Opata, you have *developed*.” He would make the latter statement only in relation to Opata’s behaviour or actions or to some attributes he (that is, Opata) is supposed or known to have come to possess. It is in terms of such *attributes* that the concept of development must, I believe, be defined.

But what specifically are these attributes, and how do we arrive at them? To answer these questions, it might be helpful to consider the development process of the insect as explained in zoology. The process starts with an egg, from

which a larva is hatched; the larva transforms into a pupa, from which the adult bee or mosquito emerges. Because the adult — that is, the object that finally emerges from the process — *functions in certain important ways, exhibiting certain attributes or characteristics*, we say it is *developed*. The reason for using the development process of the insect as a model is that it is relatively easier to come to a definite conclusion about the developed nature (or ‘developedness’) of the mosquito. The model will be suitable for investigating even such a complex object as a human society. Now, this model can be helpful in our attempt to define the concept of development, that is, to determine what it is for an object to be (considered) developed.

A general and defining characteristic of a developed object may then appear to be this : To be developed is to have the capability to perform the functions appropriate to the object, such as society or institution, said to be developed. The nature and purpose of the object will determine its specific function. Thus, the functions of the human mind are related to its nature and purpose, and would therefore not be the same as those of a political institution, for instance. The functions of the various objects that are (said to be) developed thus do differ. This is what is intended by my use of the word “appropriate” in the definition just formulated. In general, the capability of an object to perform its functions manifests itself in several ways, which include : demonstrating signs of high degrees of independence, self-sufficiency and self-reliance; being able to face serious challenges to its existence — social, political, economic, etc.; fending for itself; being able to feed itself and control its environment; demonstrating signs of inventiveness and innovativeness, and so forth. But remember that since, as already stated, the functions of the various objects differ, these manifestations or marks will also differ in some important ways. The manifestations I have just stated are to be expected in a rational, human



society, even though not all of them are unique to a human society.

It can be inferred from these manifestations that, for human society, development is to be seen in terms of *adequate responses* to the environment in all its complexities, to the existential conditions in which human beings live, move and have their being. Thus, as regards human society, development is a behavioural concept which can express itself politically, socially, economically, culturally, morally, psychologically, etc. Since behaviour is a comprehensive or totalistic concept, development must be regarded as multifaceted, a generic concept. Consequently, to see development in terms solely of economic growth or economic development is to perceive the tip of an iceberg whose base is much more complex and ramifying.

But this is not to deny that economic growth plays an essential role in the development of human society, for after all it is that which provides the material base upon which many aspects of human life depend. There is, therefore, some relation — and an important one at that — between development and economic growth. The way to articulate that relation is, in my opinion, to see economic growth as a measure of economic development, as a way in which economic development expresses itself. Economic development itself is to be considered a species of development, and development as a genus, a more comprehensive concept, under which can be subsumed political, social, cultural, moral and economic conditions as species. There must be relationships between some of these species and others (within the same genus), but those relationships are not logical. The reason is that economic development, for instance, does not necessarily (logically) imply or ensure high standards of morality or social justice. In other words, economic development is not a sufficient condition for the existence of high standards of morality. But some of these species of development may be necessary con-

ditions for others. Thus, while political development is not a sufficient condition for economic development, it is certainly a necessary condition for economic and perhaps other kinds of development. Here I am not at all alluding to Nkrumah's famous statement : "Seek ye first the political kingdom and all else will be added unto you." I am referring, rather, to the establishment of political stability which derives from the establishment of institutional rule, from the creation of viable structures of politics and government — viable structures terribly needed in an independent "political kingdom". That there is a very close connection between politics and economics cannot be seriously denied. An industrial revolution, and the economic boom that is most likely to follow it, would not take place in conditions of political chaos, instability, and uncertainty — conditions that can induce apathy, disenchantment and negativism, diminish hope and, in the sequel, throttle initiative and creativity. Thus, even though political development, as a species of development, cannot logically be equated with the genus development as such, nonetheless political development, inasmuch as it creates conditions for other kinds of development, appears to hold a preeminent position in the whole process of development. This point seems to be rationally non-negotiable.

The functional analysis or conception of development I am urging here appears to me to be attractive and plausible as it allows the possibility of each society developing according to its own values, traditions and institutions *provided* — and this proviso is a very strong one — these function properly and conduce to the attainment of the ultimate goal of all development, which is human flourishing — human welfare : the satisfaction of basic human needs.

### **The Concept of Ideology**

In the case of human societies, composed of conscious and rational beings, development must be guided and underpinned by a set of goals. These goals are the values of a society or

nation. In the development of human society, values are generally expressed and applied through the concept of ideology. Ideology is a concept which has much been travestied and burlesqued since Napoleon ridiculed and disparaged the French ideologues for their criticisms of his authoritarian rule. Napoleon's negative attitude to ideology was followed by Karl Marx who considered ideology to be a distortion of man's understanding of social reality and, therefore, as a 'false consciousness' (to use his own expression), that is, as a set of mistaken ideas and beliefs put forward in the interests of the dominant, ruling class. For Marx and Engels, ideology reflects class interests. Ripples of the Napoleonic and Marxian negative and derogatory attitudes to ideology have since been audible on the terrain of contemporary interpretations and understandings of the concept. Thus, an ideological thinking or system has come to be considered subjective, nonscientific, unrealistic, untruth, biased, partisan, nonpragmatic, closed — terms which obviously denigrate the concept of ideology.

I think that the denigration of the concept stems ultimately from the philosophical controversies surrounding the origin, nature and place of *values* in our social and political life and thought. For when we talk of ideology we are talking essentially of values. I would like in this lecture to avoid a discussion of the view held by a number of philosophers about subjectivity or relativity of values. Let me just say that in my view the philosophical controversies over values need not, or should not, lead to scepticism about the objectivity of values, seeing that the possibility of a *society* is grounded on the reality of a notion of a fundamental *core* of human values, values that are shared by members of a society, values the observance of which makes for the continual existence, stability, and smooth functioning of the society. It cannot be seriously denied surely that, for instance, there are certain things that all members of a society *want* as rational beings. (How to achieve, or whether we shall achieve, all our wants is

a different matter).

In the light of the generally-negative attitudes to the concept of ideology, it seems to me that it stands in need of rescue, for I believe that it is a useful concept relevant to development if only it can be stripped of certain unoriginal incrustations. The way to rescue it, in my view, is to go back to the origins of the term 'ideology'. For, clearly the meaning of the concept, following the simplistic Napoleonic and Marxian interpretations, has moved away from its original moorings.

The term is said to have been first used by the French scholar Destutt de Tracy in 1796 to mean the 'science of ideas'. ( I will simplify matters a bit here for lack of time.<sup>9</sup>) But de Tracy's motive was not just theoretical, for it was his view that the 'science of ideas' would lead to an adequate knowledge of human nature on the basis of which we can determine the kinds of social laws, institutions and practices appropriate for human needs. Thus, ideology — the science of ideas — was to be used to improve social and political conditions of man through the creation of socio-political norms. It is pretty clear that, (1) in its origin, the term 'ideology' had a positive connotation, (2) ideology, as a concept, had a practical, normative purpose, for it was, from its inception, to be an action-oriented and morally-loaded system of ideas, and (3) ideology was to be directly linked with politics. From de Tracy's programme and intentions, the following definition of ideology may be distilled: an ideology is a dominant set of ideas about the nature of the *good* society. Thus, the moral content or thrust of ideology is clear; it is intended to address the way things ought to be, not the way they actually are. If we consider that values are the good things that are continually desired and cherished by a society, we would say that an ideology is a collection of ideas which define and apply, that is, make explicit, the values of a society, and thus help to bring to concrete reality the vision of the good society.

The viability of a society depends upon a clear definition of its values and how these values are to be applied in the real, concrete world. Hence the importance of ideology, and its relevance to development.

But even though the term 'ideology' entered political and philosophical vocabulary at the end of the 18th century A.D., the preoccupation with some of the problems or goals covered by this concept began much, much earlier. Thus, in his famous Funeral Oration recorded in Thucydides, Pericles, the Athenian statesman, said:

Our constitution is called a democracy because power is in the hands not of a minority but of the whole people. When it is a question of settling private disputes, everyone is equal before the law; when it is a question of putting one person before another in position of public responsibility, what counts is not membership of a particular class, but the active ability which the man possesses. No one. . . is kept in political obscurity because of poverty. Our love of the things of the mind [that is, philosophy] does not make us soft. We regard wealth as something to be properly used, rather than as something to boast about. As for poverty, no one need to be ashamed to admit it; the real shame is in not taking practical measures to escape from it. Here each individual is interested not only in his own affairs but in the affairs of the state as well; even those who are mostly occupied with their own business are extremely well-informed on general politics: this is a peculiarity of ours.<sup>10</sup>

Pericles in these statements was clearly articulating the *ideology*, that is, norms and values, of Athens. Ideology, then, as a socio-political phenomenon, can be said not to be a creation of the modern world; ideological thinking is undoubtedly native to humankind, even though the term 'ideology',

unlike the term 'philosophy', was late in appearing on the horizon of politico-philosophical language.

### **The Alleged Traditional Matrix of African Socialism**

African political leaders and strategists, since regaining the political independence of their nations, have, in searching for ideologies to guide their development policies, flirted with two main ideologies: capitalism (or the free enterprise system), and socialism (or the system of public ownership of the means of production and distribution). Most of them, in the euphoric days of political independence, opted and argued for socialism, justifying their choice on the ground that socialism was foreshadowed in the traditional African socio-economic thought and practice, pointing especially to the idea and practice of communalism.

Thus, Nkrumah observed that "If one seeks the socio-political ancestor of socialism, one must go to communalism. . . In socialism, the principles underlying communalism are given expression in modern circumstances."<sup>11</sup> And Senghor also opined that "Negro-African society is collectivist or, more exactly, communal, because it is rather a communion of souls than an aggregate of individuals. . . . We had already achieved socialism before the coming of the European."<sup>12</sup> In the view of the earlier African political leaders and thinkers, then, the traditional communal practice easily translates into modern socialism; it is the larval communalism which, according to them, metamorphoses into the pupa of modern African socialism. The traditional matrix of modern African socialism cannot, therefore, be seriously denied, so they would argue. Nkrumah thought in fact that "the underlying principles [that is, of communalism and socialism] are the *same*,"<sup>13</sup> a view that implies that he sees a logical relation — that of identify — between communalism and socialism in their essentials. And in the context in which Senghor asserts that "we had already achieved socia-

lism before the coming of the European", he also undoubtedly sees a relation of identity between socialism and communalism. The identity (or sameness) relation which Nkrumah and Senghor established between the two doctrines or systems bristles with some difficulties which I have no desire to discuss in detail in this lecture.

The alleged view of the traditional moorings of African socialism seems, however, to present a simple picture of an otherwise complex situation, for it ignores the fact that private property, the harbinger and hallmark of the free enterprise system, was not totally nonexistent in the traditional economic practice. In the view of S.M. Molema, "No race or society is really entirely communistic [that is, communal], and so we find that even among the Bantu, private property, such as cattle, existed side by side with communal property, such as land."<sup>14</sup> There is, it seems to me, a great deal of truth in this statement. It is quite evident that the acquisitive elements or features of the African character could not, and perhaps can never, be suppressed or eliminated by socialist rhetoric or policy. The emphasis placed by modern African political leaders on the traditional background of socialism, while ignoring or denigrating the elements of private enterprise noticeable in the same background, was therefore undue and inappropriate, to say the least. It is thus not surprising that although they were stridently touting socialism, a number of individuals from socialist parties and governments in several African countries were pursuing private business interests, and thereby enriching themselves at the expense of the masses. Is this the result of dishonesty or ignorance or dishonest ignorance or of self-deception? All this suggests that we ought soberly to examine our *real* goals and wants.

Those African leaders who tried to anchor their rationalization of their choice of socialism in the African communalist idea most probably misinterpreted that idea. The reason

is that the African communalist doctrine is, I believe, essentially and basically a *socio-ethical* doctrine, not economic; whereas socialism, as I understand it, is primarily an economic arrangement, involving the public control of all the dynamics of the economy, even though one recognizes that socialism genuinely cherishes the values of justice and equality. If the term "socialism" is to be applied to the African communal system at all, it should be understood in the original sense of the Latin word "*socialis*", which means "belonging to companionship, or fellowship"; "fellow feeling". This interpretation is confirmed by Kaunda's preference for the term "humanism" over "socialism", as well as by the following words of Nyerere: "Both the 'rich' and the 'poor' individuals were completely secure in African society. . . . Nobody starved, either of food or of human dignity, because he lacked personal wealth; he could depend on the wealth possessed by the community of which he was a member. That was socialism. This is socialism."<sup>15</sup> These statements of Nyerere's merely underline the values of fellow feeling, mutual aid and mutual responsibility. It seems, therefore, that Kaunda's and Nyerere's understanding of socialism is consonant with the sense of the Latin word, a sense that hardly has anything to do directly with an economic arrangement, such as a centrally-planned economy. I am not saying, to be sure, that a choice of a socialist economy cannot or should not be made by an African country. But the arguments for such a choice cannot essentially be derived directly from the African socio-ethical communalist doctrine. The alleged relation of identity between the two doctrines or systems can logically be denied on the grounds that not everything that can be asserted of communalism can be asserted also of socialism, and vice-versa. Thus, it is evident that the relation of communalism to socialism has been misconstrued. The arguments I have advanced so far establish, among other things, the fact of the urgent need for a redefinition of the



concept of "African socialism".

The failure to think out the proper and adequate basis of ideology has had devastating consequences on the development effort of many an African nation. It has led earlier African champions of socialism such as Kaunda, Nyerere and Sekou Toure to retreat: one of them has abdicated the socialist throne he had occupied for a quarter of a century, his successor charting a different ideological course, having discarded the old ideological compass. In the last few years of his long reign, Sekou Toure, another advocate of African socialism, drove a nail into the coffin of socialism in his country, and, after embracing a new ideological ally in his old age when realism was beginning to take over, was himself put in his own coffin. Hardly had he been buried, and as if to say 'let the dead bury their own dead', when members of the Guinean army, taking their cue from their professional colleagues elsewhere in Africa, took over power and immediately established an ideological order different from that maintained by Sekou Toure for a quarter of a century. Other African leaders are adopting liberal, capitalist economic policies, but then, for curious reasons, refer to these liberal policies as 'pragmatic', as if the term 'pragmatic' were ideologically neutral or innocuous.

It is thus crystal clear that African nations since independence have been groping through an ideological labyrinth, a situation that undoubtedly calls for profound investigations into the nature of ideology and the principles that will guide our ideological thinking and choice. In this task of profound investigations, philosophy can be of great assistance: philosophical inquiry can reveal the inadequacies of an ideology; philosophical insights can provide a basis for a coherent and effective ideology, insights which can be seized upon by our political leaders in their strategies, policies and programmes. I am not suggesting, however, that such investigations will yield a monolithic ideological system for Africa, or even for

a particular African nation. But it is being urged that our own conceptions of human nature and of socio-political relations, our values and ideals, adequately and critically examined, should necessarily find their way into the texture of our ideologies. An unexamined ideological system is not worth pursuing or maintaining.

### **Concepts and Values in African Traditional life and Thought**

A critical examination of the concepts and values in traditional African life and thought is also the task of philosophy. This task is an important one for a variety of reasons. *First*, most people, I believe, will agree that most of the traditional ideas and values have, generally speaking, not relaxed their grip on modern African life and thought. They should, therefore, be critically examined in order to assess and appreciate their place in our contemporary lives. *Second*, a critical examination and analysis of concepts, beliefs and values in traditional thought is the only way to avoid a wholesale, indiscriminate and unconscionable condemnation of African values. Such an analysis will help us know to what extent traditional conceptions of things can and cannot be accommodated by the ethos of contemporary culture, to what extent, and how, they should be modified, and which of them should be salvaged and which should be jettisoned. *Third*, an analysis of concepts and values in traditional life will provide continuity in philosophical orientation, at any rate in respect of some core philosophical concepts and values. *Finally*, such an analysis is necessary because unless a philosophy interacts with the mentalities and core values of a people, it will not endure but will sooner or later atrophy, becoming powerless in its intellectual appeal. This last point is so important that I would like to highlight it by reference to the development of philosophy in Islamic intellectual culture.

Western scholars of the history of philosophy in Islam allege that Islamic philosophy declined after the twelfth

century A.D., that is, after the death of Ibn Rushd (Averroes, d. 1198). This claim is far from the truth. What really happened was that after that century the pursuit of the Greek-Hellenistic philosophy began to peter out. That is to say, it was the purely Greek-Hellenistic philosophical elements in the Islamic philosophical enterprise, except for logic, that began to decline after the twelfth century. Thenceforth, Islamic philosophy took a more metaphysical and mystical turn, an orientation that was congruent with the ethos of Near Eastern cultures. Thus, it was the concepts, categories and mental outlooks rooted in Islamic culture and tradition that twinkled in the twilight of the pursuit and cultivation of Greek-Hellenistic philosophy. The elements or doctrines of the ancient Greek thought that endured in Islamic philosophy after the medieval period were those consonant with oriental *Weltanschauung*. The reference to the Islamic experience is intended to indicate that philosophy, if it is to endure and enrich the lives of a people, must have a basis in the culture, experiences and mental outlooks of the people. That is, philosophical reflection should start from such elements; the organizing principles and categories of philosophizing must be extracted from them. Hence the need for a critical examination of concepts, beliefs and values in the African traditional life and thought.

### *The Idea of Democracy in the Traditional Setting*

I have said that philosophical elucidation and evaluation of traditional conceptions of things can provide an adequate basis for making realistic judgements about African cultural values and their relevance to the contemporary world. As I come to the end of the lecture, I would like to turn to a couple of these traditional conceptions, beginning with the idea of democracy. (I shall have to be brief here). Ideas and beliefs about democracy, like those about the nature of a person, society, God, human destiny, etc. were, in the preli-

terate cultural setting of Africa's historical past, given conceptual formulations in proverbs as well as in artistic and institutional expressions. The proverbs, as I have argued in detail in my forthcoming book on African philosophical thought, are not unlike the fragments of the early ancient Greek philosophers in respect both of the laconic, elliptical and enthymematic linguistic forms in which they are expressed, and of the philosophical insights embodied in them. The ancient Greek fragments were a collection of sayings, and because of their philosophical content or relevance, they were utilized by later thinkers in the reconstruction and resurrection of early Greek philosophy. The same use, I have claimed, can be made of African proverbs and sayings.

The well-known African proverb "one head does not go into council" (*ti koro nko agyina*) expresses the political value of consultation or conferring, the idea that deliberation by several heads (that is, minds) on matters of public concern is always better. The proverb or fragment says implicitly that the chief cannot or should not alone deliberate and adopt a policy that affects others, for he is (or, has) one head. While the fragment may not immediately advocate a democratic practice, it certainly repudiates autocracy or despotism (which is, thus, defined as "one head going into council"). The fragment is in fact the logical consequence of another one, which is, "wisdom is not in the head of one person" (*nyansa nni onipa baako ti mu*). If wisdom is not in one person's head, then one head cannot or should not go into council, where the exercise of wisdom is required. The fragment implies that matters concerning the whole society ought to be thought about by all the members of the society, or by as many of them as possible. Isn't this an underlying principle of the democratic idea? Isn't it appropriate — even imperative — that it be given a modern translation institutionally?

But let us explore this fragment a bit further. The frag-

ment means (1) that other individuals may be equally wise and capable of spawning equally good, if not better, ideas; (2) that one should not, or cannot, regard one's own intellectual position as final or beyond criticism, but expect it to be evaluated by others; and (3) that, in consequence of (2), one should be prepared to abandon one's position in the face of another person's superior ideas or arguments, or in the event of one's own ideas or arguments being judged unacceptable or implausible by others. The fragment underlines not only the need for, but also the acceptance of, criticism. In the political context, it enjoins rulers to be less dogmatic, but more tolerant of the views of others. Logically fleshed out, the fragment also recommends the choice and practice of consensus in political decision-making. Consensus, along with reconciliation, appears in fact to have been a political virtue vigorously pursued in traditional councils and assemblies. Consensus logically presupposes *dissensus* (that is, dissent), the existence of opposed or different views; for it was the opposed views that were, or needed to be, reconciled. But opposition (*dissensus*) was never organized into a political party in the sense understood in the politics of Western nations. Thus, in the traditional African politics, there was opposition without an organized opposition party. Whether or not African political culture would have in time evolved its own brand of the party system, no one can say for sure. Colonialism slammed the doors against such a possible evolution. By their political intolerance and cavalier rejection of the pursuit of *consensus* and reconciliation, African governments (or, most of them) are the greatest offenders against our atavistic political values and attitudes.

### *The Status of the Individual in the African Social Order*

Now let me say a few things about the place of the individual in the African social order<sup>16</sup> and then conclude this lecture. The place given to the concept of individuality in the social

philosophy of a people often determines or influences their ideological thinking and choice. Scholars, usually from individualistic backgrounds and mentalities, say about communalism that it offers no room for the expression of individuality, the assumption being that individuality is submerged by the communal apparatus, that communalism is antithetical to individualism, so that the two cannot co-exist. These judgements, made usually by non-African scholars about the African socio-ethical doctrine of communalism (judgements which ignore the idea of individuality in our social thought), appear, *mirabile dictu*, to have been accepted *in toto* by the advocates of African socialism such as Nkrumah, Senghor, and Nyerere in their anxiety to find anchorage for their ideological choice in the traditional African ideas about society. That the African social order was communal is perhaps undeniable. Nevertheless, I think it would be more correct to describe that order as amphibious, for it manifests features of both communality and individuality. To describe that order simply as communal is to prejudge the issue regarding the place given to individuality in African social thought and practice.

Consider the fragment: "The clan is like a cluster of trees which, when seen from afar, appear huddled together, but which would be seen to stand *individually* when closely approached." The late Mr. J.A. Annobil of Cape Coast explains this fragment (translated from the Fante) thus: "If one is far away from a cluster of trees, he sees all the trees as huddled or massed together. It is when he goes near that he recognizes that the trees in fact stand *individually*. The clan is just like the cluster of trees."<sup>17</sup> The proverb stresses the social reality of the individual: it expresses the idea that the individual has a separate identity and that, like the tree, some of whose branches may touch other trees, the individual is separately rooted and is not completely absorbed by the cluster. That is, communality does not obliterate or

squeeze out individuality.

That individualism is well understood comes out also in the well-known fragment, "the clan is merely a multitude" (crowd: *abusua ye dom*), implying that the individual cannot always and invariably depend on the clan or group for everything. The proverb is thus intended to deepen the individual's sense of responsibility for oneself. It clearly suggests that the relevance and importance of the group (clan) are exaggerated by our people themselves. The individual's sense of responsibility for himself or herself is in fact expressed explicitly in the maxim, "it is by *individual* effort that we struggle for our heads" (*ti wopere no korokoro*). This expresses the idea of individual effort as a necessary condition for struggling for our interests and needs. African social thought thus offers a clear, unambiguous statement on the value of individuality, with all that this concept implies, even though it at the same time makes an equally unequivocal statement on the value of communality. Thus, African thought does not see these two concepts as exclusive or antithetical. It tries to steer clear of the Scylla of exaggerated individualism (as found in the West) and the Charybdis of exaggerated communalism (= Communism, as presently understood and practised in some parts of the world). African social thought seeks to avoid the excesses of the two exaggerated systems, while allowing for a meaningful, albeit uneasy, interaction between the individual and the society. But one cannot be oblivious of the practical problems involved in the attempt to balance the two concepts, rendering unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's.

## CONCLUSION

Aristotle observed 2300 years ago that philosophy began in wonder: "for it is owing to their wonder that men both now

and at first began to philosophize.”<sup>18</sup> Wondering or curiosity is a human quality. Each one of us from time to time wonders, and consequently raises questions, about human destiny, the meaning of life, the existence of God or of some ultimate being, the good life, and about very many other fundamental questions concerning the various aspects of our life and experience. Most people do not care to give any sustained attention to such questions; a few may offer cavalier, episodic and jejune answers; but the propensity to pose fundamental questions is real and undeniable. It is not given to man to make himself immortal; *but it is certainly given to man to philosophize*. Man cannot but philosophize, that is, pose fundamental questions, and reflect on fundamental aspects, of human existence and experience. But while the attempt or attention of others to such questions is episodic, that of the professional philosopher is sustained, nuanced and systematic, and is thus intended to yield results.

In this lecture, I have attempted, if briefly, to define the nature and purpose of the philosophical activity with a view to clearing up some misconceptions about them. Some account of the role of philosophy in human affairs has been given, an account that clearly shows that philosophy is a conceptual response to human problems and experience. Philosophy does this (that is, conceptual responding) by way of inquiry into fundamental ideas. A systematic, critical and rational inquiry into basic ideas is terribly important, as human institutions — social, political, economic, legal, moral and educational — as well as well-intended actions and policies take off from, or are based on, a set of ideas. Such an inquiry can be fruitful; it is in fact indispensable.

Socrates, the celebrated ancient Greek philosopher, tenaciously maintained that “the unexamined life is not worth living” (Greek: *ho anaksetastos bios ou biotōs anthropō*).<sup>19</sup> That is to say, the only worthwhile life for a human being or human society is the one whose basis and goals have been



thoroughly examined, searched out. This means that we should be self-critical, prepared to subject our own lives — our ideas, beliefs, values, goals — to serious examination if we should be what we want to be and know what things are most worthwhile.

There is, I believe, some justification for asserting that much of our contemporary African life is an *unexamined* life, badly in need of serious, fundamental examination. Recurrent problems in our political, ideological and educational systems; our irrational readiness to debase or denigrate our own values and to apotheosize those of others; our irrational readiness to gleefully borrow institutional and ideological systems from outside (just as we borrow huge sums of money from outside), oblivious of the fact that such alien systems were hammered out on the anvil of the cultural and historical experiences of other peoples; our unconscionable readiness to tinker at complex and ramifying problems by applying simple remedies to them; our irrational desire to look for shortcut answers to our personal, social or national problems, coupled with our flirtations with, or even love for, the superficial — these features of our political, aesthetic and mental life have undoubtedly resulted from the lack of serious and profound examination of the African cultural life and experience, particularly since the early euphoric days of our political independence.

By raising fundamental questions about the intellectual foundations of our life, by clarifying issues of public concern that often have important philosophical dimension, and by critically examining the principles underlying alternative policies and actions — philosophy, I have reason to believe, can play some part in the urgent pursuit of the examined and thus worthwhile life, in the search for the intellectual sheet-anchor of our life in its totality, and in the pursuit of the profound, systematic and realistic interpretation of the African experience.

## NOTES

1. Plato, *Republic*, 514<sup>a</sup> — 521<sup>b</sup>.
2. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1103<sup>b</sup>26.
3. *Eleventh Theses on Feuerbach*, 1845.
4. John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1971).
5. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1095<sup>a</sup> 28 — 9.
6. Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (11th Printing, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1965), p.174.
7. David Sidorsky, "Shifts in the Pragmatic Scene: From the Real to the True to the Good", *Humanities*, Washington, D.C., Vol.5, No.2, April, 1984, p.7, my italics.
8. A.C. Ewing, "Philosophy in India," *Philosophy*, Vol.26, July 1951, p.263.
9. On the origins of the term "ideology", see, for instance, Emmet Kennedy, *A Philosophe in the Age of Revolution, Destutt de Tracy and the Origins of "Ideology"* (The American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, 1978).
10. Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Book 2, Chapters 37 and 40.
11. Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for De-Colonization and Development with particular reference to the African Revolution* (Heinemann Educational Books, London, 1964), p.73.

12. Leopold S. Senghor, *On African Socialism*, translated with an Introduction by Mercer Cook (Praeger, New York, 1964), p.49.
13. Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism*, p.74, italic mine.
14. S.M. Molema, *The Bantu: Past and Present* (Edinburgh, 1920), p.115; see also: John Mensah Sarbah, *Fante Customary Laws* (London, 1897, reissued, London, Frank Cass and Co. Ltd, 1968), pp.57, 60, 89; J.B. Danquah, *Akan Laws and Customs* (London, Routledge and Sons, Ltd., 1928), pp.206, 210.
15. Julius K. Nyerere, *Ujama: Essays on Socialism* (Oxford University Press, Dar es Salaam, 1968), pp. 3 — 4; italic in the original.
16. In the discussion of the status of the individual in the African social order, I am drawing freely on a chapter in my forthcoming book *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought* (Cambridge University Press).
17. J.A. Annobil, Translated from his book *Mmebusem Nkyerekyeremu (Proverbs and their Explanation*, Cape Coast, 1971), p.29.
18. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 982<sup>b</sup>12.
19. Plato, *Apology* 38<sup>b</sup>.



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